

January 16, 2009

TO: Teresa Parsons,
Director's Review Program Supervisor

FROM Meredith Huff, SPHR
Director's Review Investigator

SUBJECT: Earlene Kent v. Western Washington University (WWU)
Allocation Review No. ALLO 08-031

Ms. Earlene Kent requested a Director's Review of her position's allocation by submitting a Request for Director's Review form on May 20, 2008. On June 13, 2008, Mr. Eric T. Nordlof, Attorney at Law, Public School Employees of Washington, filed information and exhibits as Ms. Kent's representative. This review is of written documents and a review conference was not held. The review period is the six months prior to February 21, 2008.

Director's Determination

The Director's review of WWU's allocation determination of Ms. Kent's position is complete. The review was based on written documentation and classifications. As the Director's investigator, I have carefully reviewed all of the file documentation and classifications. I conclude that on a best fit of overall duties and responsibilities, Ms. Kent's position is properly allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 2 classification.

Background

On February 21, 2008, the WWU Human Resources office received a completed Department of Personnel - Higher Education Unit Position Questionnaire (PQ) from Ms. Kent. Ms. Kent's position was allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 2 class. Ms. Kent indicated she believed her position should be allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 3 classification. The PQ is signed by Danny Chan, Operations Supervisor, as the immediate supervisor and Robert Schneider, Director, Administrative Computing Services, as the second level supervisor.

By the Report of Position Review document dated May 1, 2008, Ms. Holly Karpstein notified Ms. Kent that her position was properly allocated to the Information Technology Specialist 2 class. Ms. Kent requested a Director's Review of Ms. Karpstein's findings by submitting a Director's Review Request Form on May 20, 2008.

Ms. Kent's written comments

Ms. Kent works in the Administrative Computing Services (ADMCS) at Western Washington University. Her current classification is Information Technology Specialist 2 (ITS2). In her unit, there are two other ITS2 positions and two student help desk consultant positions. Ms. Kent reports to Danny Chan, Operations Supervisor.

On the PQ, Ms. Kent indicated that her work time is split; 50% as IT Support Consultant and 50% as Esign Web Forms Consultant. Details of these responsibilities are found in the Part III attachment to the PQ. (Exhibit A-14 page 3 and attachments) In summary, Ms. Kent's duties are:

50% - IT Support Consultant:

Under general supervision provide technical support for Administrative applications, software products, services and applications. . . .support . . . users attempting to connect to various databases including problem identification and resolution. . . . Monitor campus wide network performance; servers, systems and services for malfunctions, high system load and or down time. Report issues and problems to appropriate technicians . . .Develop original publications for users...Based on institutional policies and procedures, create and revoke user accounts and permissions for administrative applications . Identify operational problems; determine and kill jobs that are not running properly. . . Assist users connecting to the data warehouse; troubleshoot problems. . . .As member of . . . help desk team answer calls, email inquiries and Magic trouble tickets to resolve user problems. . . Utilize full range of technology products (Word, Excel, Access, Front page, Publisher, Photoshop) to produce reports, spreadsheets, correspondences and publications related to Administrative Computing.

As required by, assigned by, approved by or working with her supervisor, Ms. Kent does the following summarized duties: . . . test and evaluate Banner, Esign, Nolij, and data warehouse upgrades, applications and patches; determine campus or small office training approach and develop course materials. Assist in training new employees... mentor lower level employees. . . test Nolij upgrades, locate problems with upgrade or administrative tools, and report problems to supervisor or database administrators; . . .work with analysts to identify and document changes to web applications. . . .submit new procedures for editing to supervisor . . . draft critical notifications via bulleeyes for distribution to target audiences. . . .test and support new versions of data warehouse application. . . .Define difference between versions, submitting findings to supervisor and analyst. . . edit MyWWU portal using RSS editor.

50% Esign Web Forms Consultant

After supervisor approves, work for a particular area, conduct a needs assessment with client discussing different strategies for accomplishing their goals, specifically discussing the capabilities and limitations of Esign.. . work independently to prioritize work...if Esign is not the best fit, recommend other possible solutions. . [with] my supervisor and self to assist in transition to banner form when that is the most agreeable. .testing new versions of Esign from both user and admin point of view. Find problems, report to supervisor and web forms analyst. When assigned by supervisor to be project lead in development and maintenance of access databases that utilize Esign data extracts, assist user in training and to import the extracted data . . Assist in development of one of the databases. Provide weekly support . . Work independently to prioritize work on project, setting deadlines and meeting campus wide academic and administrative needs for Esign forms....Analyze causes for data corruption when Esign performances issues arise. Resolve issues ...to restore functionality . . . refer more complex problems to web forms analyst for resolution....

Ms. Kent describes how her work and progress are checked by the supervisor as follows: *“My supervisor discusses work with me at some point every day – we have an open and collaborative working environment whereby we share information, fixes to problems, and new problems that affect large groups of people. Also once a week I send my supervisor a brief recap of duties performed during the week. If my supervisor has additional information for me on a particular problem or fix, he will usually share it with me verbally.”* (Exhibit A-14, Question 11)

Ms. Kent indicates that when requested or during her supervisor’s absence she directs two employees at the student help desk. (Exhibit A-14, Question 15) During her supervisor’s absence she also plans for two Information Technology Specialist 2 positions (one full time, one part-time nights). This includes directing the student and ITSII employees in Eforms testing, running account management reports and processing accounts. (Exhibit A-14, Part II, Questions 1 and 7)

WWU HR Exhibit C-3 is an organization chart of the Administrative Computing Services, dated March 5, 2007. This chart includes the Operations unit where Ms. Kent’s position is assigned.

Supervisors’ written comments (Exhibit A-13 Part III attachment)

Ms. Kent’s immediate supervisor, Danny Chan, Operations Supervisor, signed the PQ Part III. For Question 2 a, which asked about task the employee is performing outside of the present classification, Mr. Chan responded: *“Acts as lead/standin, has delegated responsibilities in my absences.”* He indicated Ms. Kent has been performing these duties for *“4 years plus”*. In response to Question 3 about the level of supervision he exercises over Mr. Kent’s position, Mr. Chan responded *“Direct”*.

Mr. Chan, provided the following examples of decision-making authority he has delegated to Ms. Kent’s position: *“Assume daily assigning of tasks to employees during my absences. Meet with user groups to ascertain dept. requirements, e.g. Esign forms – CBE/Fairhaven.”*

Mr. Robert Schneider, Director, ADMCS, signed as the second level supervisor. Mr. Schneider made the following comment regarding the accuracy and completeness of statements of employee and immediate supervisor: *“After review w/supervisor, believe Earlene works less than 30% on e-sign forms.”*

Mr. John Law, Vice Provost, Information and Technology Services, also signed the PQ.

Rationale for Director’s Determination

A position review is neither a measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which the work is performed. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the class that best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. See Liddle-Stamper v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

The Personnel Resources Board (PRB) has held the following:

. . . because a current and accurate description of a position’s duties and responsibilities is documented in an approved classification questionnaire, the classification questionnaire becomes the basis for allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall duties and responsibilities as documented in the classification questionnaire. Lawrence v. Dept of Social and Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-99-0027 (2000).

In Salsberry v. Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, PRB Case No. R-ALLO- 06-013 (2007), the Personnel Resources Board addressed the concept of best fit. The Board referenced Allegrì v. Washington State University, PAB Case No. ALLO-96-0026 (1998), in which the Personnel Appeals Board noted that while the appellant's duties and responsibilities did not encompass the full breadth of the duties and responsibilities described by the classification to which his position was allocated, on a best fit basis, the classification best described the level, scope and diversity of the overall duties and responsibilities of his position.

Glossary of Classification Terms

In reviewing this position, I have considered the following terms. The Department of Personnel's Glossary of Classification Terms defines these terms. The Glossary is found at <http://www.dop.wa.gov/HRProfessionals/Classification/>.

Complexity of work – Refers to the scope, variety and difficulty of the duties, responsibilities and skills required in order to perform the work. Complexity may be categorized as follows [in part]:

2. Routine – Involves the performance of several related and repetitive tasks, which require some judgment in respect to the rules, procedures, materials, or equipment that, will be used.
3. Complex – Requires the use of a wide variety of rules, processes, materials, or equipment that require an application of specialized knowledge or skills. Decisions must be made independently regarding which rules, processes, materials or equipment to use in order to effectively accomplish work assignments.

Independent – Has the authority to make decisions without supervisory approval regarding the work processes and methods which will be used; can modify procedures as long as such changes conform to agency/institutional and departmental policies and regulations.

Supervision required – The extent of control exercised by the supervisor with respect to the way assignments are made; the latitude that the position incumbent has in performing and/or determining work methods and priorities; the scope of decision-making authority that the position incumbent has to use discretion in determining a course of action in new or unusual situations; and the degree of review of completed assignments. There are four basic types of supervision: [in part]

1. Direct supervision – Work is performed in accordance with specific instructions regarding assignments to be completed and sequence of work steps to be employed. Decision-making authority is limited to clearly defined work procedures, formats and priorities. Work is reviewed for accuracy, and adherence to instructions and established procedures.
2. General supervision – Recurring assignments are carried out within established guidelines without specific instruction. Deviation from normal policies, procedures, and work methods requires supervisory approval, and supervisory guidance is provided in new or unusual situations. The employee's work is periodically reviewed to verify compliance with policies and procedures.

Information Technology Specialist 1 (ITS1) (Class code 479I)

In considering the duties and responsibilities described in the PQ, and other documents, Ms. Kent's position fits within the Class Series Concept for the Information Technology Specialist series. The **Class Series Concept** states in part: "*Positions in this category perform professional information technology systems and/or applications support for client applications, databases, computer hardware and software products, network infrastructure equipment, or telecommunications software or hardware. ...Positions*

which perform information technology-related work to accomplish tasks but are non-technical in nature would not be included in this occupational category.”

Information Technology Specialist 3 (ITS3) (Class code 479K)

The **Definition** of the ITS3 states, in part:

“In support of information systems and users in an assigned area of responsibility, independently performs consulting, designing, programming, installation, maintenance, quality assurance, troubleshooting and/or technical support for applications, hardware and software products, databases, database management systems, support products, network infrastructure equipment, or telecommunications infrastructure, software or hardware.. . The majority of assignments and projects are moderate in size and impact an agency division or large workgroup or single business function; or internal or satellite operations, multiple users, or more than one group. Consults with higher-level technical staff to resolve complex problems.” (emphasis added)

Ms. Kent stated on the PQ, Question 4: “My supervisor will recommend a general course and ...I will carry out the details and report back...Work assignments come to me from my supervisor first...When these requests [from user departments] come in to me directly...I discuss with my supervisor, and if he approves the work, I take over ...I usually discuss these [e-mail] inquiries with my supervisor and if action is required, carry out the necessary steps...and inform my supervisor of the result...Whenever possible, I prioritize these requests with my supervisor.”

Question 11: “My supervisor discusses work with me at some point every day...we share information, fixes to problems, and new problems that affect large groups of people. Also, once a week I send my supervisor a brief recap of duties performed during the week.”

Part 1, Major Duty and attachment to Part III: “Under general supervision provide technical support for Administrative applications, software products, services and applications...When required by my supervisor test and evaluate Banner, Esign, Noli and data warehouse upgrades, applications and patches[;] work with database administrators, system analysts to resolve issues if find during testing...In partnership with supervisor, work with analysts to identify and document changes to web applications, including MyWWU portal...Edit MYWWU portal tabs using RSS editor...submit new procedures for editing to my supervisor...At the direction of my supervisor test and support new versions of data warehouse application...”

In addition, Ms. Kent has identified many of the responsibilities and duties described on the Part III attachment to the PQ as directed by, assigned by, approved by, edited by and/or completed in partnership with Mr. Chan, the supervisor. Mr. Chan describes the level of supervision he provides as “direct”.

Ms. Kent’s position does not have the responsibility and authority that “independently performs consulting, designing, programming, installation, maintenance, quality assurance, troubleshooting and/or technical support...” as defined in the Glossary of Terms and as required by the Definition of the ITS3. The ITS3 class is not the best class to describe the overall duties and responsibilities assigned to Ms. Kent.

Information Technology Specialist 2 (ITS2) (Class code 479J)

The **Definition** of the ITS2 states:

“In support of information systems and users, performs standard consulting, analyzing, programming, maintenance, installation and/or technical support.

“Under general supervision, follows established work methods and procedures to complete tasks on computers . . . or databases for small scale systems or programs . . . Performs standard tasks such as consulting with customers to identify and analyze technology needs and problems; responding to and resolving trouble reports from users; . . analyzing problems for parts of applications and solving problems with some assistance; supporting and enhancing existing applications in compliance with specifications and standards; conducting unit, system or usability testing; writing specifications and developing reports; developing and conducting application, software and/or system operation training for users; or serving as part of a problem solving team addressing more complex issues. The majority of tasks are limited in scope and impact individuals or small groups. Complex problems are referred to a higher level.”

Ms. Kent’s position provides technical support in applications, software products, services and Administrative applications for clients of the ADMCS. She identifies problems and determines resolutions in response to Help Desk problems and requests. She assists clients with accessing and extracting information from databases. She consults with customers to identify and analyze their needs and provides assistance in resolving those problems. Following institutional policies and procedures, Ms. Kent creates and revokes user accounts and permissions for administrative applications. Working with an Esign analyst or Banner analyst, Ms. Kent may suggest Esign and/or Banner applications to resolve clients’ problems, as described in her example of working with Fairhaven. These duties and responsibilities, as well as those described in more detail on the PQ and other documents, are consistent with the ITS2 classification.

Ms. Kent indicates that during her supervisor’s absence she will supervise the other employees in the unit. Ms. Karpstein indicated that Ms. Kent had supervision responsibilities about 10% of her work time during the previous six months. Ms. Kent also acts as a mentor to the student employees. Although the Typical Work statements are not used for allocation purposes, they do provide insight into the type of duties found at this classification. The Typical Work statement says, in part, “May supervise lower level staff.” Further, a reallocation is not determined by one responsibility, such as an occasional supervision responsibility, but is based on the overall responsibilities and duties of the job.

After considering all of the information provided, I find that Ms. Kent’s duties and responsibilities overall are best encompassed in the Information Technology Specialist 2 classification. Ms. Kent’s position is allocated correctly to the Information Technology Specialist 2.

Appeal Rights

RCW 41.06.170 governs the right to appeal. RCW 41.06.170(4) provides, in relevant part, the following:

An employee incumbent in a position at the time of its allocation or reallocation, or the agency utilizing the position, may appeal the allocation or reallocation to . . . the Washington personnel

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resources board . . . Notice of such appeal must be filed in writing within thirty days of the action from which appeal is taken.

The address for the Personnel Resources Board is 2828 Capitol Blvd., P. O. Box 40911, Olympia, Washington 98504-0911.

If no further action is taken, the Director's determination becomes final.

Cc: Eric Nordlof
Holly Karpstein, WWU
Lisa Skriletz, DOP

Enclosure: List of Exhibits

List of Exhibits

A. Filed by Earlene Kent on May 20, 2008

1. Request for Director's Review Form
2. Letter from Earlene Kent Re: Position Review for Earlene Kent.
3. Majority of tasks assigned by supervisor
4. Exhibit A – About my WWU
5. Exhibit B – My WWU portal changes
6. Exhibit C – Oracle Instance manager (Killing Jobs)
7. Exhibit E – ADMCS help desk, Support Services
8. Exhibit F – SEIB File transfer
9. Exhibit G – Student Quarterly Purge
10. Exhibit H – Work Example
11. Exhibit H – Work Example
12. Project Development – Goal, Proposed Schedule and Jobs to be completed.
13. Report of Position Review, including Part III
14. DOP's Higher Ed Position Questionnaire
15. Emails from Earlene Kent to Danny Chan

B. Filed by Eric Nordlof (Attorney at Law) Cover letter with Exhibits identified;

On June 13, 2008 (*Same as items above in A.*)

1. p. 1 Explanatory letter regarding the exhibits from Earlene to Director, DOP.
2. pp. 2-3 Narrative response by Earlene to the conclusion of the position review
3. pp. 4-10 Examples of Earlene's work in support of her contention that she independently identifies institutional information technology needs, explains the need to her supervisor, and follows through with the project after securing approval.
4. pp. 11-12 Narrative response by Earlene to the conclusion of the position review.
5. pp. 13-14 Narrative response by Earlene to the conclusions of the position review contained in unnumbered bullet points one and two on page three.
6. pp. 15-26 Examples of Earlene's work which support her contentions on page 13-14. The relevance of each example is explained in the narrative.
7. p. 27 Narrative response by Earlene to the assertion in the last unnumbered bullet point of the position review
8. p. 28 Example in support of the project development narrative.
9. pp. 29-46 Copies of electronic mail reports from Earlene to her supervisor detailing her daily work.

C. Filed by WWU July 28, 2008 with July 25, 2008 cover letter for exhibit packet.

- Exhibit 1 ADMCS Help Desk Job Description
- Exhibit 2 DOP Class specifications ITS2 and ITS3
- Exhibit 3 ADMCS Organization Chart dated March 5, 2007
- Exhibit 4 Emails relating to missing contents from Request for Director's Review